

# CULTURAL LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

---

## CULTURE AND PROGRESS AT HOME.

### BOOKS.

IF John Bunyan had dropped theology and had studied Lewis Carroll's *Adventures of Alice in Wender Land* he might have written such a book as George MacDonald's *Phantastes (Phantastes; a Faerie Romance, for Men and Women)*: Loring, Boston). MacDonald's artistic standard of execution is not equal to his conception; if it were, it would be in his power to produce works such as the world has seldom seen. To the conception he brings rare poetic fancy; large-hearted, wholesome, out-door, every-day charity; tender, subtile, spiritual insight; marvelous knowledge of the workings of human hearts, and inexhaustible love of nature. But to the execution he brings a hand which is often either impatient or careless—we do not know which—we suspect it is carelessness rather than impatience, for impatience seems in-

compatible with such tenderness as he shows: but only impatience, carelessness, or lack of culture, can account for his so often failing in finish, in artistic shape. To one who has learned to love and comprehend his real greatness,—for that he is one of the great writers of the day there can be no question,—this failure is a frequent distress, and an increasing surprise. So many exquisite pictures are marred by one uncouth word, one awkward phrase, that at last one grows sore under the annoyance, as one does under the inexplicable persistence of some intimate friend in a disagreeable personal habit. But as, in even that case, grace and beauty and loveliness of character can finally make us forget the clumsy trick into which the flesh has fallen, so finally, in reading and loving George MacDonald, one comes to forget that it is often in a clumsy sentence that he sets his wise and tender sayings.

Phantastes is indeed a "faerie romance." Adding to the license of the romance, the limitless scope of the fairy story, it takes us on, we know not, and we wonder not, where, until the whole is as real to us as if we had dreamed it in our own beds. The fancies are not simply fancies, however. There is underlying all the subtlest suggestion of allegory; so subtle that it can never weary, so subtle in fact that there would probably be as many interpretations as readers. Perhaps the most exquisite thing in the story is the conception of the flower-fairies, as described in the first two chapters; the flower being a sort of outer body to the fairy which it can put on or off as it likes. "Whether all the flowers have fairies," he says, "I cannot determine, any more than I can be sure whether all men and women have souls;" and, "Especially do I desire that they should see the fairy of the daisy,—a little, chubby, round-eyed child with such innocent trust in his look. Even the most mischievous of the fairies would not tease him, although he did not belong to their set at all, but was quite a little country bumpkin. He wandered about alone, and looked at everything with his hands in his little pockets, and a white nightcap on,—the darling. He was not so beautiful as many other wild flowers I saw afterwards, but so dear and loving in his looks, and little confident ways." The story of "Cosmo Von Wehrstahl" is perhaps an irrelevant episode in the narrative. The device of making it part of a book read by Anodos in fairy land, does not quite cover its introduction; but the story itself is as weird and uncanny in its atmosphere, and as perfect in execution, as any of Zschokke's. It is perhaps, in its way, one of the most artistic things which MacDonald has done. In fact the whole "faerie romance" itself is on a higher plane, artistically, than any other story of his which we know. It is not, of course, a book of such worth as *Alec Forbes*, or *Robert Falconer*; but it is a purely poetical conception, and in parts most exquisitely worked out.

There seem to be so many pilgrims in one, and such a shifting succession of shrines, in *The Pilgrim and the Shrine* (or Passages from the Life and Correspondence of Herbert Ainslie, B.A.; London: Chapman & Hall; New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons), that reading the book reminds one of trying to look into a kaleidoscope which somebody else holds and always turns just before the figure is distinctly seen. A young English theologue, seized with misgivings as to the truth of the Church of England doctrines—setting sail for California to avoid taking orders—roughing it in the "mines" of the Sierra Nevada and of Australia—with a Herman Melville episode between of love-making in the Navigator's Islands—bringing up at last as a justice of the peace in Sydney, and marrying an Australian heiress who had such a "redundancy of nature that all the books of the poets seemed to be written upon her," "with the addition that she seems also capable of having written the poems herself;"—all this would seem a tolerably fair stock of material for five

hundred small pages, without any great help from theology and metaphysics. But when we add that there is no vexed question in either of those domains with which this metamorphic pilgrim is not grappling during his journey, it is plain that it cannot be easy to adjust one's self to the gait necessary to keep pace with him. The difficulty is also much enhanced by the constant change of person and tense in the narrative, so that we make abrupt transition from the modest autobiographical to the minute historical, then to the still more confiding journalistic, and all by turns, and no one long. For these reasons the book seems to us artistically bad, in spite of much brilliancy of thought and really acute analytic treatment of the puzzling problems of religious belief.

The History of Greece, by Professor Ernst Curtius, of the University of Göttingen (Charles Scribner & Co.), is the crowning work of a long and laborious life devoted almost entirely to Grecian antiquity and its kindred studies. The learned author made several scientific journeys through the country whose story he now tells, and before publishing the present volumes he gave to the world a number of valuable works on the architectural remains, the inscriptions, the legends, and the history of the Hellenic people. These were rather for the student than the general reader. In the present work he has attempted to summarize, in a connected and readable narrative, the results of many years of research, incorporating the discoveries of modern scholarship, without encumbering the page with elaborate discussions and superfluous references. In compass, his history is similar to Mommsen's *History of Rome*; but it is rather more popular in its aims than that excellent work; equal in weight as an authority, but more attractive to those who read for the interest of the narrative rather than with the purpose of following the historian step by step in his researches. Yet Professor Curtius is a philosophical writer. He is not satisfied with rehearsing salient facts and incidents; he pushes generalization to its furthest legitimate limits, and traces back to their source the causes which rendered Greece great and glorious, and gave her such an extraordinary influence upon the whole civilized world. His style is graphic and animated, and the translation, by Prof. Ward, of Manchester, retains much of the elegance and freedom of the original. The first volume, which has just appeared, is devoted to the natural features of the country, the prehistoric age, the migrations of the tribes, and the history of Peloponnesus, Attica, and the Hellenes beyond the Archipelago, down to the time of the Persian wars. Four volumes will probably complete the work. Prof. Curtius, it may be interesting to know, was the tutor of the present Crown Prince of Prussia.

In the prosecution of his excellent plan of giving to the world occasionally a few fragmentary literary and scientific essays in the intervals of more serious labor, Prof. Max Müller has published a third volume of *Chips from a German Workshop* (Charles Scribner & Co.), consisting of critical and biographical papers

of a somewhat lighter and more popular character than the contents of the first and second volumes. They comprise some entertaining studies of old German literature, essays on Schiller, Bacon, Bunsen, and the Sieur de Joinville, some curious antiquarian and philological inquiries, and one or two miscellaneous pieces; and at the end of the book are given a great many letters from Bunsen to the author, which have never before been published. It will be seen, therefore, that the table of contents is agreeably diversified, and likely to attract a great variety of readers. Of the style of the book it is unnecessary to say much. Müller's reputation as an interesting writer is almost as general as his fame for scholarship. It is not enough to say that he uses the English language like a native; he has a rare faculty of making the darkest matters clear and the driest subjects interesting; he writes with singular force and directness, and with a literary dexterity which almost any author might envy.

The fourth and concluding part of William Morris's *Earthly Paradise* has been issued from the press of Roberts Brothers, of Boston, and the work is now complete. Considered as a single connected composition, it is the longest poem in the English language; but while a certain unity of design runs through the whole, the rhymed stories may be read separately, without any diminution of their interest. The part just published embraces the six stories from classical, mediaeval, and Scandinavian lore, that are supposed to be told in the months of winter. The finest of them is "The Fostering of Aslang," a nurse-tale of weird attractiveness, which is narrated with singular pathos and effect. But all six, like the previous stories of *The Earthly Paradise*, are full of sensuous beauty, and are purpled over with a rich poetic glory that cheats the charmed reader into forgetfulness of faults. Faults there are of construction, frequent false rhymes, and lines that would be bald prose but for the "*idem sonans*" of the end of the couplet, inversions of style and discords in the music; but these are as nothing in the "linked sweetness long drawn out" of thirty thousand lines of exquisite description. The general melody is so delicious, the theme goes on so smoothly, the soft vision imparts such pleasure to the raptured sense, that we are content to enjoy without caring to analyze our feelings that we may ascertain the secret of the enjoyment. But we cannot help giving expression to the very painful regret inspired by all the poems Mr. Morris has given us, that they breathe a spirit of undeniable skepticism. "The idle singer of an empty day," as he styles himself, he writes too evidently from a conviction that there is nothing beyond the grave; and the roses that bloom so sweetly in his *Earthly Paradise*, seem, in this regard, like the flowers with which the dying Mirabeau wished to be crowned as he entered upon what he affected to believe "an eternal sleep." Everywhere in the volume, in the Icelandic legends, in the mediaeval myths, in the Grecian fables, the pagan idea interposes that death is the end of all things, and the whole meaning of the poet resolves itself into a dithyrambic utterance of

*carpe diem*—let us make the most of earthly joys, for there are none other. This consideration induces the belief that the poems of Mr. Morris, beautifully wrought as they are, cannot long retain a hold upon the human heart. They lack the vitalizing principle of faith, and, despite the fascination of their fluent rhymes, will probably fail of lasting fame.

From the same press with the volumes of William Morris comes *The Monitions of the Unseen, and Poems of Love and Childhood*, the latest offering of Jean Ingelow to her admirers. The work will excite, we think, a general feeling of disappointment, as indicating no advance upon her previous efforts in song. There is a great deal of tenderness in these recollections of early life, but the sadness that pervades them becomes a monotone. In the longer poem with which the book opens, the teaching is set forth in charming cadences and with befitting dignity of expression; the lyrics, upon which more careful workmanship has been expended, have a finish that seems to have been purchased, in some instances, at a loss of strength, and there is an excess of repose in them—of dreamful quiet, of folding of the hands to sleep, as if they had been inspired of poppy rather than of Hippocrene. But if they suggest no elevation of her wonderful powers, they are such poems as no other woman in England than Jean Ingelow might have written, and we recognize in her here, as in her previous volumes, a poet always tender and true, whose writings are calculated to make us better and purer, to enlarge our sympathies and exalt our aims.

A journal of the philosophy of speculation, as "speculation" is commonly understood, devoted to an elucidation of the mysteries of Erie and kindred topics, might with some safety be predicted a prosperous life. It would seem to have a "field," as the saying is. But a journal of speculative philosophy! Why, who cares for such things in this country? What attraction could it possess for busy Americans? Those who do not think (and there are a few such) would not want it; while most of those who think they do think, would most likely imagine that sort of philosophy to bear about the same relation to hard sense as stock-gambling bears to legitimate business, and shun it accordingly. Yet just such an anomaly exists, and, let us hope, prospers. It is an able, and, for the English language, unique publication. May it live long, if for no other reason than to give certain of our spiritual guardians a chance to read a little of the German philosophy they are so ignorantly conscientious in denouncing. The volume before us (*Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Vol. III. St. Louis: Wm. T. Harris, Editor) is devoted chiefly to the systems of Fichte and Hegel.

#### KELLOGG.

WHILE music is depressed in New York, it is some satisfaction to know that our best artists are not altogether silent, but, like missionaries of culture, are carrying the song and the symphony in triumph through the provinces. Three unusually good com-

panies have been all the season employed, to their own profit and the pleasure of the public, in making the grand musical tour of the United States. Theodore Thomas has taken his splendid orchestra to all the principal cities; Nilsson has captivated the Great West; and Miss Kellogg, with a nice little party of artists, has been cheered from Canada to Carolina. It is always pleasant to hear of the prosperity of Miss Kellogg; first, because she is our countrywoman, and secondly, because she has reached her present eminence by sheer hard work and Yankee pluck. The genius of song came to her, not as a good fairy smoothing away difficulties and filling life with pleasures and sunshine, but as a stern mistress, exacting severe labor and liberal of sharp rebukes. The young girl's first attempt was a failure; her second was little better; the result of her third would have discouraged any singer not freely endowed with enthusiasm and courage. Good judges, indeed, were prompt to appreciate the purity and sweetness of her voice, and to predict for her a bright future; but the majority of Academy audiences are not good judges, and Miss Kellogg was never fairly valued by the public until she was seen as the *Margherita* of Gounod's "Faust." There was a delicate grace, a poetic feeling, a sweet, appropriate simplicity in that personation, which fairly enchanted us all. That was seven years ago. Since then many good singers and some few great ones have passed across our stage, but Miss Kellogg still remains our favorite *Margherita*, the accepted standard by which we measure all other representatives of this dearest of lyric heroines. It is not only that in form, and face, and action, and intellectual comprehension of the character, she fulfilled our ideal, but there was an indescribable quality in her voice that accorded perfectly with the deep, mysterious tenderness of the poem and the dreamy spirit of the music. There is nationality in voices. The French is elegant, weak, unsubstantial, over-refined; the German, strong and hard; the Italian, rich, sensuous, and passionate. The American has more of the bird-like quality, more purity and freshness than any of these. It is equal to any in flexibility; it rather surpasses the Italian in sweetness, though it lacks both richness and strength. It is the voice in which youth should carol its joys, and maiden modesty sing its love; not the voice of tragedy, of spiritual exaltation, or of fiery passions. Adelina Patti is not rightly an American, but she has an American voice, warmed with a little Italian heat. Parepa combines some of the best qualities of three sorts of voice—American purity, Italian fire, and German force. Nilsson's organ is entirely phenomenal. It is like an American voice greatly strengthened, but chilled and rarefied. The best example we have ever had of the pure American soprano—clear, fresh, true, and sympathetic, is found in Miss Kellogg. We feel that it must have been in just such tones that Goethe's *Gretchen* sang simple ballads at her spinning-wheel, and whispered her love at the garden window, and prayed God's pardon in the prison-cell.

Our young countrywoman has not only been liberally favored by Nature, but she has been a conscientious student of Art; and if she rarely attempts those brilliant feats of vocalization in which musical jugglers of the school of Carlotta Patti delight, she has at any rate learned to make the best and most pleasing use of her voice; she has no vices of style, she is always correct, and she never sings a false note. The danger against which she now ought to guard is an excess of courage. When she went to London she challenged comparison with Nilsson's *Margherita*, and (if we may judge from the specimens of that part which Nilsson has given in concerts) her boldness was amply justified. While Nilsson was in the flush of her success in New York, Miss Kellogg gave a concert at the Academy of Music, singing Nilsson's songs, and again winning a triumph. She attempted the grand rôle of *Leonora* in the "Trovatore," and if her success was not complete, it at any rate exceeded the expectations of her friends. Her latest essay was in the oratorio. She sings in the "Messiah," with sweetness, simplicity, and feeling; but the broad style, the grand declamation, the sustained power and spiritual dignity which are demanded of Handel's true interpreter—these are not hers, and her most ardent admirers must have felt that in striving to supply their place with graceful and conscientious vocalism, she was attempting a task for which Nature had not fitted her. And yet we are glad that she has made this venture, and shall be glad to see her repeat it. The inevitable imperfections of the performance do not blind us to its very decided merits. Miss Kellogg cannot make us forget Parepa, but in this style of art she certainly surpasses Nilsson.

#### THE WATER-COLOR EXHIBITION.

THE Water-Color Exhibition at the National Academy of Design, while in some of its details it is both interesting and satisfactory, as a whole disappoints the expectations we had formed in regard to the development and popularity of a branch of Art which, for many reasons, we desire to see widely cultivated and appreciated. Compared with previous exhibitions, this is only of average merit; there is no marked increase in the number of artists, nor, in but few cases, any remarkable progress as to individual skill and taste. Still we must remember how very lately the experiment commenced; how long it was before the water-color artists attained their due rank in public estimation in England, and we must note the signs of promise here apparent. While Colman holds his own in the rendering of his favorite Spanish subjects, William Hart and A. F. Bellows have made decided progress. We are not surprised to learn that several of the latter's pictures have been sold since the exhibition opened: there is a fresh, free feeling for nature in them which is very charming and very true; the study of the "Old Mill at Shagford" is full of this genuine and genial character. "Feeding the Pets," by Darley, is a farm-yard scene drawn vigorously and faithfully from nature. We are glad to meet our old friend George Harvey,

who, a quarter of a century ago, was famous for his American Sketches : his manner now seems hard and formal, but it is correct and careful. William Magrath has made a decided advance ; there are very clever traits in his "Out of the Gloom" and "Pensées d'Amour." We are pleased that Falconer continues to give us faithful representations of our memorable buildings ; his picture of the shop where Fulton served his apprenticeship is a quaint and pleasing relic. J. Henry Hill and Charlotte Deming, Mary Duffield and Harry Fenn, exhibit some good things. J. Simmonds has two vivid and well-defined female heads. The "Christening Party," by Bellows, two or three landscapes by Geo. H. Smillie, and a view of Lake George, by William Hart, are very good. T. C. Farrer has several characteristic pictures ; Mrs. Carson paints flowers with much grace and skill,—a crucifix entwined with passion-flowers from her hand is beautiful ; Romako gives us some excellent Italian subjects, and Rivoire clusters of delicate wild flowers. Mr. Blodgett has sent two remarkable French specimens of animal painting. Of the two hundred and seventy-three water-color pictures, there are a score or two of choice and charming works.

#### AMERICAN GLACIERS.

STAY-AT-HOME travelers have hitherto had one disadvantage compared with those who cross the ocean, in their search for the grand or strange in Nature. They could find in our own country every variety of scenery that exists in Europe,—rivers, lakes, mountains, skies, worthy of Italy or Switzerland,—everything but glaciers. They have found here new sensations for the *blast* European traveler,—cataracts beyond compare, geysers scarcely equaled in Iceland, marvelous Yo-Semite gorges, and great *Sequoia* forests that have somehow escaped the catastrophes that separate us from the Tertiary Period, and in which, no doubt, have sported mastodons and all their kindred ; all these, but no glaciers, unless they be in the unexplored regions of Alaska. The ranges near the Pacific coast seem high enough for them, but Professor Whitney has lamented their entire absence. The Sierra Nevadas show traces everywhere of glaciers so recent that they appear to have been melted away only last season ; but all that remains of them is here and there a little rudimentary mass of ice, or fields of perpetual *nive* snow, which are remarkable for depth and area, but not sufficiently extended to start a glacier movement. The heights of Colorado are less snowy than the Nevadas, and the *nive* masses are less ; and the Wind River, Wahsatch, and Uintah ranges, though possessing a very great extent of lofty peaks, are even less snowy than the Laramie range of Colorado. But Clarence King, connected with Major-General Humphrey's *U. S. Geological Exploration of the 40th Parallel*, has been fortunate enough to find three fine glaciers on the northern side of Mount Shasta, the famous volcano of Northern California. As the ascent

had previously been made always from the southern side, they had escaped observation. One of these glaciers is about five miles long and half as wide. They are broken by "cascades," and show all the characteristic features, even to the streams of water flowing from them, milky with suspended sediment, and promising to the future faculty of the State a fine field of investigation on the peculiar diseases that follow from drinking such water. The United States can depend on its centers of goitre and cretinism, as well as of glacial movement. Also on Mt. Tachoma, or Rainier, as it is generally called, a still larger system of glaciers has been discovered, with their tributary glacial streams. The main White River glacier pours straight down from the rim of the crater, and is ten miles long and reaches a width of five miles, and is probably some thousands of feet thick. It has also been just discovered that Mt. Hood, of the Cascade Range of Oregon, boasts three other glaciers with ice caves, crevasses, and torrents, terminal and lateral moraines, quite worthy of the Swiss Alps, and adding to ordinary glacial attractions the further attraction of volcanic craters.

#### PRESIDENT MCCOSH'S LECTURES.

DR. McCOSH, President of Princeton College, is at present delivering in New York a course of Lectures to the Times, on *Natural Theology and the Evidences of the Christian Religion*. They are on the Ely Foundation, and are addressed to the students of the Union Theological Seminary ; but they are thrown open to the public, which is attending on them in large numbers. They are directed against the prevailing errors of the day, and have a special reference, at least the earlier portion of them, to the speculations of Professor Huxley, Professor Tyndal, and Mr. Herbert Spencer, and will go on to discuss Positivism, Materialism, and the historical questions raised by M. Renan. The lectures consist of three series. *First Series*—The Relation of Physical Science to Religion, in which it is shown that the Argument from Design is not done away by modern science, and such subjects as the Conservation of Physical Force, Star Dust, Protoplasm, and the Origin of Species are discussed, while it is shown that there is a plan in the structure and the history of the world, and this in entire conformity with revealed truth. *Second Series*—The Relation of Mental Philosophy to Religion, in which it is shown that mind exists and can rise to the knowledge of God, and the mental principles involved in the theistic argument are unfolded ; while there is an examination of the theories of Nescience and Relativity of Positivism and Materialism. *Third Series*—The Relation of History to Religion, in which M. Renan's theories are criticised, and the arguments derived from the life and character of Jesus and the progress of the early church are explained and defended. Until the publication of the lectures in book form, extended criticism would be premature, owing to the unsatisfactory character of the reports which have appeared in the daily papers.